CIVIC DIGITAL FELLOWSHIP

THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT: FACILITATING TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT SPRINTS WITH FEDERAL OPEN DATA

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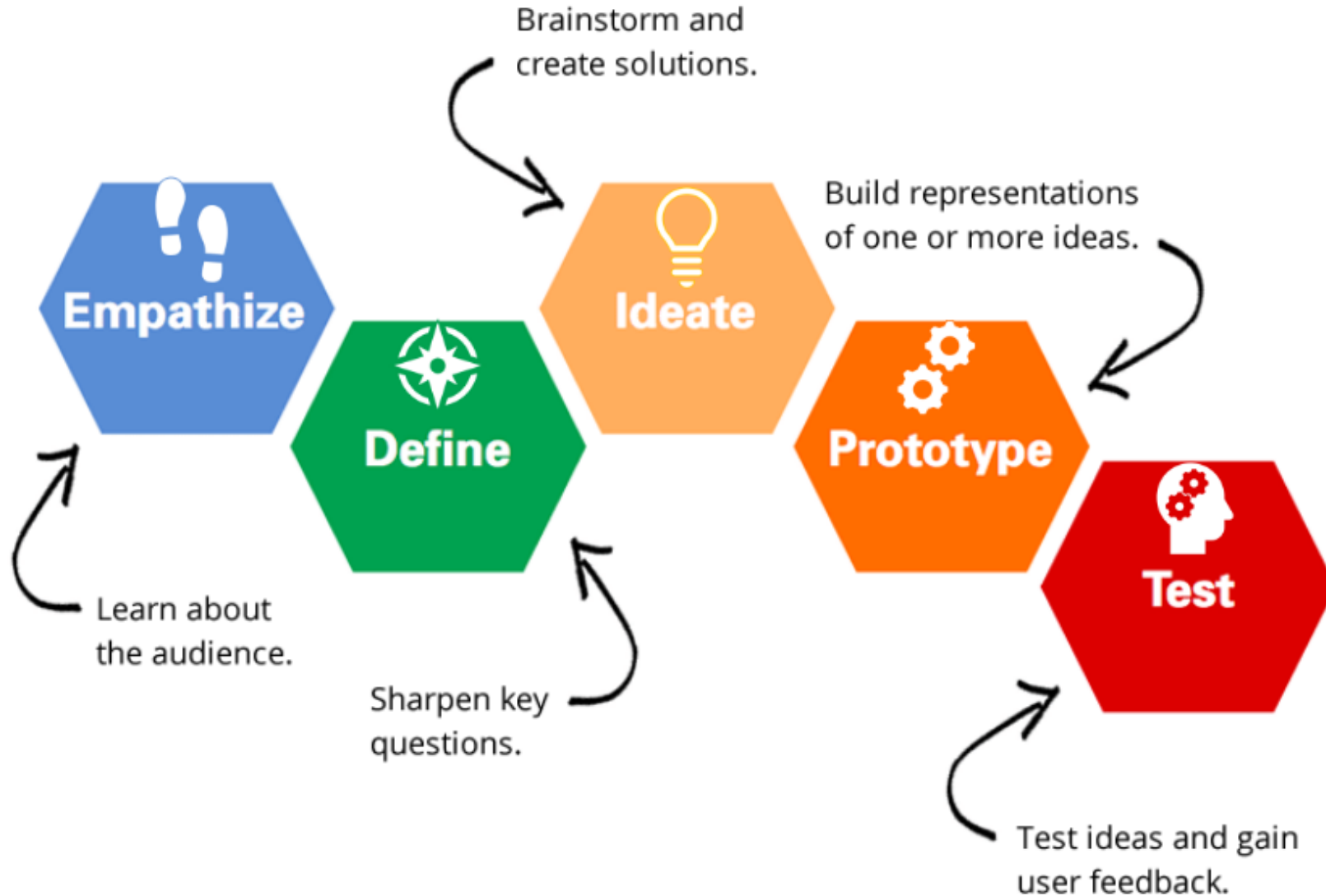
Census Open Innovation Labs

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→Brings together technologists, government, and communities to rapidly prototype digital products that are powered by federal open data and that solve real-world problems for people across the country

→12 week virtual technology development sprints

Human-Centered Design Process

Brainstorm and create solutions.

Build representations of one or more ideas.

Empathize

Define

Ideate

Prototype

Test

Learn about the audience.

Sharpen key questions.

Test ideas and gain user feedback.

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User Engagement Workshop

→ Conduct user research, build empathy for end users
→ Learn about problem statements at grassroots level
→ Gather information that can inform tech solutions

Empathize

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The Challenge

→ For the first time this year, we were running the user engagement workshop virtually

→ Rethinking traditional design thinking activities

→ Keep participants engaged in larger groups

→ Shorten a day-long event into 2.5 hours

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The Solution

Conflicting Information +
Not Enough Useful Info for
Consumers

Conflicting information overload

What types of plastic types are there? Which are more common? Less common? Most detrimental?

What products have plastic in them? Leggings? Cigarettes?

Education about plastic use / plastic products etc...

No unified place to address this issue

Why are we using these types of varieties of plastic? What are we still permitting its use?

Disconnect between municipal, state, and national level

Data discrepancies

Don't have enough data on how bad this problem is

Most data is from beaches and we do not have enough inland info

Technical Breakdown of Micro/Macro Plastics

Microplastics (total outweigh) versus macroplastics (most visable/get more attention)

Microplastics have a unique availability to absorb toxins.

Microplastics/nanoplastics cannot be as closely monitored and end up in food both for human consumption and predators in the food chain

DC Area Plastic Straw Ban (Photo of Turtle w/ straw in nose); Plastic

How do we make beach cleanups fun, engaging

Bag Tax: Understanding which really positively affects ocean pollution.

Pattern Matching

Take a sticky note!

Goal:
Identify patterns/ themes from the stories we just heard

Question:
What common pain points, frustrations, or challenges did you notice?

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The Results

- ✓ **50+ participants**

- ✓ **Proven the use of a human-centered design model in a virtual format**

- ✓ **Real user input to help determine the best ways to use data**

- ✓ **Increasing federal agencies' exposure to innovative design methodologies**

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Learnings + Next Steps

For our next workshop:

→Involve more technologists

→Simplify activities and extend time per activity

→Focus on talking about specific people and communities, rather than the challenge in the abstract

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